

# DVVRPC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

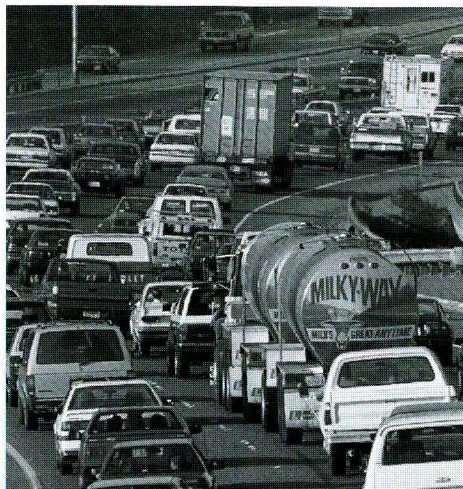
## FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION BILL BODES WELL FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW JERSEY

What lies ahead for America's highway and mass transit systems? In what promises to be the largest transportation legislation enacted to date in this country, two much-debated bills are currently the focus of compromise by the U.S. House and Senate. By the time this newsletter is published, it is assumed that the sequel to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), otherwise known as Bestea or Nextea, will be a done deal. While the details are in question, the implications of the legislation remain the same.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey will fare well under both the House and Senate versions of the federal legislation. The House version of the huge spending bill would increase mass transit and highway aid to Pennsylvania by 59% and New Jersey by about 46%. Under the Senate's scenario, both states would get increases of about 14%. Even so, Northeastern law-

makers have hailed the transportation package, and predicted that in the end the Delaware Valley will get a substantial boost in funding.

This immense legislation has drawn fire from President Clinton, House Budget Committee Chairman John R. Kasich (R-Ohio) and scores of congres-



sional conservatives and moderates who are concerned that it exceeds levels outlined in last year's balanced-budget deal, and that it may crowd other important domestic initiatives.

Currently, the House and Senate are working to forge a compromise spending bill somewhere in the neighborhood of \$214 billion to \$217 billion over six years. One focus of concessions is a statement by Representative Bud Shuster (R-Pa), the House's chief negotiator, outlining his willingness to accept the Senate's version of a new drunk driving law and

acknowledging that demonstration projects in the House version could be eliminated. The trade-off for this would be an assurance that future gasoline tax revenue would be used exclusively for highway construction. Congressional aides now say that Shuster's conciliatory comments greatly enhance the prospects that Congress will impose a tough "0.08" nationwide drunk driving standard this year and that negotiators will consider scaling back the scope of spending for demonstration projects.

It has been noted by many that the 42,700-mile interstate highway system carries 2-1/2 times the traffic it did in 1975 and that congestion continues to mount. While the U.S. population has increased 10% during the past decade, vehicle miles traveled have increased by 37%.

On the other hand, environmentalists and other organizations were poised to fight the legislation if funding for bicycle and pedestrian programs were cut. As it now stands, the legislation includes substantial increases for nontraditional transportation projects such as construction of bike paths and jogging trails. Overall, it looks like a win-win situation.

According to Elizabeth Schneider, Executive Director of the Southern Governors' Association, "Both bills undoubtedly represent movement in the right direction. There are steps taken to provide equity, and this is real progress." ☺

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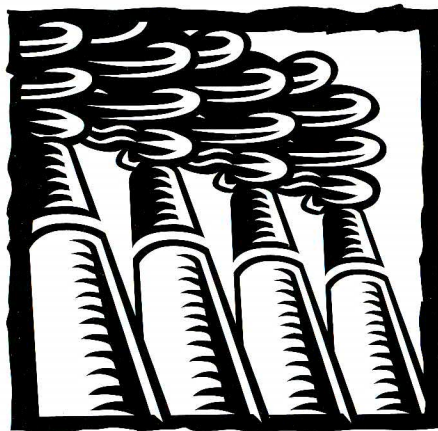
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# REGIONAL INDICATORS MEASURE PROGRESS TOWARD 2020

Setting forth a vision for the Delaware Valley was the focus of the Year 2020 Long-Range Plan, which was adopted by DVRPC's Board in 1995. That vision coupled a strong economy and seamless transportation system with a healthy environment and vibrant communities. The Plan envisioned a more efficient, competitive and



sustainable region by fostering new development in and around existing communities while easing traffic congestion and enhancing mobility.

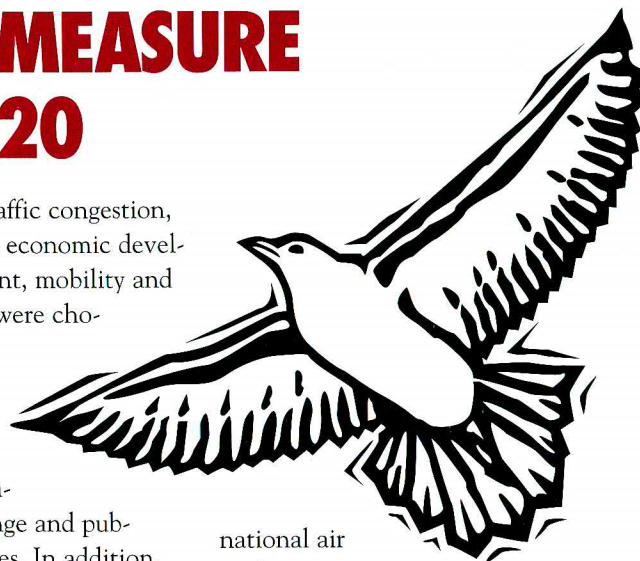
To advance the goals outlined in the Plan, the Commission's Board went one step further by adopting

*Regional Indicators: Measuring Our Progress to 2020*, a tracking system that examines benchmarks toward achieving recommendations in the



areas of physical form, traffic congestion, environment, air quality, economic development, freight movement, mobility and housing. The indicators were chosen from a list of more than 500 potential measures, and are income-based, regional in geographic scope, measurable over the long-range and publicly available data sources. In addition, DVRPC balanced the final selection of indicators so that they would collectively represent the eight issue areas mentioned above. Twenty-seven indicators were selected and are presented in the report, which is included in this mailing.

The Commission recently chose to move expeditiously with an Update of the Year 2020 Plan because of forthcoming restrictions placed upon New Jersey as a result of the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) rejection of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) to achieve



national air quality standards. Since the State of New Jersey's enhanced Inspection and Maintenance Program did not meet the EPA's deadline, the state's ability to advance federally assisted transportation projects was limited as of April 10, 1998.

Eliciting significant public input and comment is always a high priority for DVRPC. Therefore, two public hearings were held on March 5 and 9, 1998 to allow citizens to comment on the Update of the Year 2020 Plan. The public comment period for the draft update opened on February 18, 1998 and closed on March 20, 1998. ❧





# COOPERATION LEADS TO MORE AND BETTER LOCAL SERVICES

There are 353 cities, townships and boroughs in the nine-county Delaware Valley, each exerting its own local control and making independent decisions regarding land use. The populations of these municipalities range from tiny Tavistock Borough in Camden County (with only nine residents) to the almost 1.5 million people living within the City of Philadelphia.

The desire for local control often

officials. The purpose of these guides is to demonstrate how local officials can launch specific cooperative ventures with their neighbors in adjacent municipalities to improve services and/or reduce costs. Three key arguments in favor of cooperating with other municipalities include saving money, improving the delivery of services and gaining political clout.

The first of these guides, released in July of 1997, described how to create a regional recreational commission. The second in the series, *Inter-Municipal Cooperation Alternatives for Highway and Transit Corridor Planning*, describes how municipalities can save money and increase efficiency through cooperative transportation planning. The region's municipalities are faced with common issues, such as road maintenance, bridge repair and congestion. In addition, the traffic generated by a development in one community along a corridor may impact other communities along the same corridor. Municipalities therefore need to explore whether

conflicts with other important goals, such as improving local services while simultaneously reducing local taxes. Many elected and appointed officials now recognize the cost efficiencies and other benefits of working together with neighboring municipalities to improve service delivery.

As part of a continuing project to foster inter-municipal cooperation, DVRPC is preparing a series of short "how-to" guides for elected and appointed

or not working and planning with adjacent and neighboring communities can help them to provide more effective and efficient transportation facilities and services while reducing costs.

At a time when the price of necessary improvements almost always exceeds limited available resources, the increased political clout gained by cooperating with other municipalities may determine whether a project succeeds or fails. ●



## EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS NOW AVAILABLE

DVRPC is known for its wealth of pertinent statistics and information; most helpful among these is the series of data bulletins that the agency periodically publishes. The newest of these is *Data Bulletin No. 57*, a collection of employment estimates that includes the number of employed persons by type and sector for each county in an expanded four-state, 28-county area. These counties include the nine DVRPC member counties as well as 19 surrounding counties, and comprise the Commission's data service area.

Annual estimates are available for five-year intervals from 1970 - 1985, and every year from 1986 - 1995. Employment data is tabulated for each of the 28 counties, and totals are provided for the two Delaware counties, the two Maryland counties, the fourteen New Jersey counties, the ten Pennsylvania counties, the nine-county core region, the 14-county consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) and the 28-county data service region.

Employment data in this bulletin was compiled from estimates tabulated by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA data, which is released annually, are calculated for the most current year as well as previous years.

In addition to BEA data, DVRPC obtains employment statistics from other sources, including the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Transportation Planning Package.

Additional information about employment, population and housing can be obtained from DVRPC by calling 215-592-1800.



# ENTERING A NEW AGE OF TRANSPORTATION

**T**he future of transportation may surprise many. Commuting to work could be quicker and easier; safety could be ensured and help could be automatically dispatched in emergencies. How is this possible when today we sit in our cars in congested traffic or wait anxiously for a train that is late?

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is the means to reach this ideal future. In 1991, recognizing the need to address the aging transportation network in this country, Congress created the ITS program, a plan to focus on intelligent infrastructure and intelligent vehicles. Intelligent infrastructure helps send real-time data on system performance to travelers and transportation operators. Intelligent vehicles, on the other hand, complement the ITS infrastructure by

focusing on safety and information systems for cars, trucks, buses and trains. Together, the "smart" infrastructure and vehicles make it possible to solve congestion problems and to give information to travelers so they can select better routes or modes.

Once in place, benefits are inherent for everyone. Metropolitan areas will see advanced traffic surveillance and signal control systems resulting in travel time improvements; electronic fare payment technologies for transit systems will mean increased revenues; and incident management programs will reduce delays associated with congestion. In rural areas, advanced collision-avoidance technology will prevent many crashes. Commercial vehicles on the nation's roadways will benefit from onboard safety systems that reduce fatalities; and freight mobility sys-

tems will mean productivity gains for private carriers.

In the Delaware Valley, the program is getting underway through a coordinating council established by DVRPC to develop policy and set priorities. The council is comprised of the New Jersey and PA Departments of Transportation, the Philadelphia Office of Transportation, the Philadelphia Streets Department, the Philadelphia Police Department, SEPTA, the Delaware River Port Authority, PATCO, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. The role of the council is to identify users of the transportation system and operating agencies who need to know about travel conditions and incidents; examine information flows between agencies; define agency

coordination procedures; recommend methods to improve communication among agencies; and notify travelers using mostly existing equipment and off-the-shelf technology. The project will also establish a prototype incident management task force along a freeway corridor to improve communication and cooperation among local agencies that must respond to incidents.

It is easy to imagine how ITS can and will improve the concept of travel. The future holds great promise, and through this 18-month DVRPC initiative, the world of tomorrow is already in sight. 



Television monitors located at PennDOT's District 6-O Traffic Operations Center provide real-time information to staff about conditions along I-95 in Center City Philadelphia.

Photo by Peter Kind





## IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

Imagine an area so lush and healthy that it could be called the “Land of Lakes”, where people are able to walk out their back doors to swim, fish and boat. Imagine that living in this area is open to all income levels through a true mix of housing types, and that diverse shopping is a viable option. Imagine employment opportunities within a 30-minute drive of Center City Philadelphia and Cherry Hill. You need not leave this place to your imagination — a land of lakes exists in the Upper Mantua Creek Valley of Gloucester County.


The Upper Mantua Creek Valley covers portions of Mantua Township, Pitman Borough, Glassboro Borough and Washington Township in New Jersey. Much of the land in the Upper Mantua Valley has been subdivided for residential and other uses; the remaining land is under pressure for development.



Recognizing the impact of surrounding development on the creek environment, DVRPC recently completed a plan that identifies measures to protect the resources that have made the Mantua Creek Valley so appealing. If implemented, these efforts will result in a greenway that protects the natural environment, scenic vistas and recreational opportunities along the Upper Mantua Creek for generations to come.

The *Upper Mantua Creek Greenway Implementation Plan* has been developed as a “how- to” guide for municipalities, the county and state, the Mantua Creek Watershed Association and Gloucester County Federation of Watersheds, as well as residents interested in protecting this fragile environment. Through research, analysis and public outreach, DVRPC established five greenway objectives, along with recommended actions for achieving these goals. They include the following: preserve a natural vegetative buffer along Mantua Creek and Duffield Run; manage stormwater on a watershed

basis to more effectively control runoff quantity and quality; educate and involve the public on water quality issues, the importance of stream buffers and good land stewardship; provide sufficient public access, recreational and educational opportunities along the Mantua so as to instill appreciation for the creek and to discourage trespass on private property; and protect farmland, historic resources, lakes and other scenic areas to preserve the area’s heritage and to boost community pride.

The *Greenway Implementation Plan* is a follow-up study to the Open Space Element of DVRPC’s Year 2020 Comprehensive Plan for the Delaware Valley, and is similar in nature to the *Rancocas Creek Greenway Plan*, which was published by DVRPC in 1997. The goal of these plans is to raise public awareness for the need to preserve open space through creative and cooperative solutions. Copies of the *Upper Mantua Creek Greenway Implementation Plan* are available by contacting DVRPC’s Regional Information Services Center. 



*Photos this page courtesy of Barry Seymour*



# NEW JERSEY HIGHWAY BYPASS FUNDING WITHHELD

In a vote that surprised many, DVRPC's Board in March voted to withhold funding for right-of-way acquisition and construction for the project popularly known as the Millstone Bypass (US1/SR 571) in New Jersey. Although generally supportive of the project and having approved the design phase for 2000 in the FY 1999 - 2001 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Board felt that the environmental assessment should be completed before the project moves forward.

The March Board meeting was marked by aggressive public participation, both for and against the project. The local group, STOP, turned out to protest the findings of the congestion management system (CMS) study that had been conducted by Frederick R. Harris, consultants, and presented to the

Board by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT). The DVRPC Board has expressed its endorsement for the CMS. STOP's representatives also insisted that this project was being "fast-tracked" by NJDOT and proceeding without sufficient public input. Support for the project, however, was evident through the voices of residents in Penns Neck, where noise and congestion are a problem that would be mitigated by the bypass, as well as by West Windsor officials, Princeton University and Mercer County.

According to John Dourgarian, an NJDOT spokesman, "We felt we should approve the programming of this funding to advance the project to the next stage. Not getting the funding will not slow the project significantly because the design work cannot proceed until a federally

mandated environmental assessment has been completed." This study is due in the fall of 1998.

NJDOT has proposed the Millstone Bypass as a two-lane, 2.3 mile roadway from Route 571 (Washington Road) near the Amtrak railroad bridge in West Windsor across Route 1 and near Carnegie Lake, reconnecting with Washington Road, west of Route 1. Had it been approved, the spending schedule would have included \$25 million in 2001 for right-of-way acquisition and another \$25 million in 2002 for construction. This schedule would have been approved as part of DVRPC's TIP, a capital programming tool that coordinates transportation projects in the region. Projects that use federal funding must be approved by DVRPC's Board and included in the TIP. %

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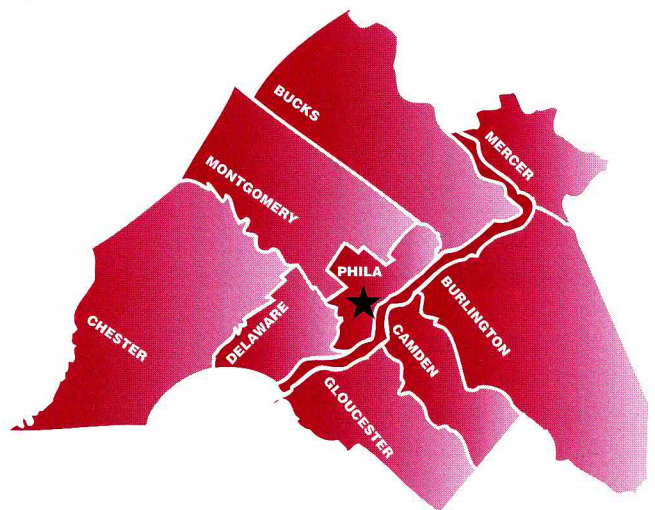
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Candace B. Snyder, Editor

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*Since its establishment in 1965, DVRPC has been instrumental in ensuring the orderly growth of the bi-state region. As the federally-funded metropolitan planning organization, DVRPC also provides data and consulting services to public and private sector organizations, and fosters cooperation among all levels of government. Shown above is the nine-county Delaware Valley region.*

SPRING 1998